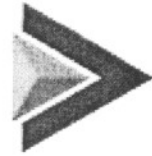


# The Task Force



July 16, 2004

United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the thousands of members of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the nation's oldest national gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender advocacy organization, I strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 3313, the "Marriage Protection Act of 2003." Slamming the courthouse doors to gay and lesbian Americans, as H.R. 3313 proposes to do, is unprecedented, unconstitutional and distinctly un-American.

If enacted, this so-called "court-stripping bill" would deny married same-sex couples access to all federal courts for purposes of challenging the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). In effect, only state courts could consider challenges to DOMA, and states courts are without jurisdiction to consider the constitutionality of harmful discrimination against same-sex couples in such areas as immigration, Social Security survivor benefits, and federal tax issues. Gay and lesbian Americans cannot be so singled out for inferior access to justice. The United States Constitution guarantees to *every* American due process and equal protection under our laws. This necessarily includes unfettered access to federal courts, whose very purpose is to review and resolve unequal treatment that flows from federal laws.

For the sake of preserving the second-class status of same-sex relationships, H.R. 3313 proposes to eviscerate America's 200-year-old system of separation of powers and checks and balances. This is offensive in purpose and unprecedented in effect. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force strongly urges you to oppose H.R. 3313.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Foreman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Matt Foreman  
Executive Director